CHATEAU MONTELENA
ESTABLISHED 1882

2017 Calistoga Zinfandel

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton

INTRODUCTION

One of the most underappreciated lessons of grape-growing is resilience: turning obstacles into opportunity. In 2012, we began the first phase of a comprehensive replant of the historic Montelena Estate vineyard. As vines were removed and new blocks planted, we were simultaneously filled with sadness but also hope for the future, especially in regards to our Zinfandel. But amidst that internal dilemma, we recognized an opportunity to create something wonderfully distinct and released our Calistoga Zinfandel in 2013, as the intricate expression of our vineyard and some of the most historic and well-regarded Zinfandel plantings in Calistoga. It's been a remarkable journey peppered with plenty of 100 year old vines, new ideas in the cellar, and local heritage that culminates with the 2017 vintage.

VINTAGE WEATHER

A wet winter, followed by a textbook temperate spring, galvanized early growth in the vineyard. While the summer weather proved to be more turbulent with short periods of fog interspersed with persistent heat, the Zinfandel vines tend to be quite robust and even thrive during intense conditions. Making multiple passes to harvest selected fruit in the fall helped crystallize the dynamic nature of the vintage in the resulting wine.

NOSE

Brambly and dark with compounding waves of dried cherry, cedar, and Chinese five-spice, the wine opens with effusive fruit and, after a few moments, fresh roses.

PALATE

The energetic nature of the palate perfectly reflects the complexity of the growing season as bright acid contrasts black pepper, which yields to plenty of ripe raspberry and cherry candy. This, in turn, transitions to fresh mint and abundant spicy cloves.

FINISH

It's spice that drives the finish with tension and grace as the fine-grain tannins slowly give way to dark-roasted coffee bean and a hint of lemon zest.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES
September 1 – October 1

ALCOHOL
14.5%

BLEND
100% Zinfandel/Primitivo

BARREL AGING
16 months in French, Irish, and American oak, 19% new

BOTTLING DATE
April 2019

WINEMAKER
Matt Crafton

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